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6 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

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10 GREGORY L. DOWDY, No. C 09-3144 WHA (PR)

11 Petitioner,

**ORDER GRANTING  
RESPONDENT'S MOTION TO  
DISMISS; GRANTING LEAVE TO  
FILE LATE EXHIBIT**

12 vs.

13 BEN CURRY, Warden,

14 Respondents.

(Docket Nos. 4 & 7)

15

16 **INTRODUCTION**

17 Petitioner, a California prisoner proceeding pro se, filed this habeas case under 28  
18 U.S.C. 2254. Respondent was ordered to show cause why the petition should not be granted.  
19 Respondent has filed a motion to dismiss on statute of limitations grounds, petitioner has filed  
20 an opposition, and respondent has filed a reply. Good cause appearing, petitioner's motion to  
21 file an exhibit belatedly is **GRANTED**, and is hereinafter referred to as his supplemental  
22 opposition.

23 For the reasons discussed below, respondent's motion to dismiss is **GRANTED**.

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**STATEMENT**

25 In July 1998, a jury in Contra Costa County Superior Court convicted petitioner of  
26 robbery and found that petitioner had two prior felony convictions (Resp't. Ex. A). The trial  
27 court sentenced petitioner to a term of thirty-two years to life in state prison (*ibid.*). The  
28 California Court of Appeal affirmed the judgment in an unpublished opinion on September 30,

1 1999 (Resp't. Ex. B). Petitioner did not appeal his conviction to the California Supreme Court.

2 Petitioner indicates that sometime in 2005, he filed a habeas petition in state court,  
3 which was denied, although he does not specify which California court (Pet. Mem. 5). On  
4 October 9, 2008, petitioner filed a federal habeas petition that was dismissed for failure to  
5 exhaust. Thereafter, on December 24, 2008, petitioner filed a petition for a writ of habeas  
6 corpus in the California Supreme Court that was denied on June 10, 2009 (Resp't Ex. C). On  
7 July 10, 2009, petitioner filed the instant federal petition.

## 8 ANALYSIS

9 Respondent contends that the petition is barred by the statute of limitations. The  
10 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (“AEDPA”) became law on April 24,  
11 1996, and imposed for the first time a statute of limitations on petitions for a writ of habeas  
12 corpus filed by state prisoners. Under AEDPA, prisoners challenging non-capital state  
13 convictions or sentences must file petitions for relief within one year from the date on which the  
14 judgment became final by the conclusion of direct review or the expiration of the time for  
15 seeking such review. 28 U.S.C. 2244(d)(1)(A).<sup>1</sup> Here, petitioner pursued a direct appeal of his  
16 conviction to the California Court of Appeal, but not to the California Supreme Court. The  
17 “time for seeking” direct review expired when the deadline for filing a petition for review to the  
18 California Supreme Court. The deadline was November 9, 1999, forty days after the California  
19 Court of Appeal’s decision was issued. *See* Cal. R. Ct. 8.264, 8.500(e). Accordingly, the  
20 limitations period began to run on that date and it expired one year later, on November 9, 2000.  
21 Under the “mailbox rule,” the instant petition is deemed filed on June 30, 2009, the date it was  
22 signed and presumably given to prison authorities for mailing. *See Houston v. Lack*, 487 U.S.  
23 266, 276 (1988). As the instant petition was not filed until nearly nine years after the one-year  
24 limitations period had expired, the instant petition is untimely absent tolling.

25 The one-year statute of limitations is tolled under § 2244(d)(2) for the “time during  
26 which a properly filed application for state post-conviction or other collateral review with

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28 <sup>1</sup> In rare instances neither argued in nor applicable to the present case, the limitation period may run  
from a different date. *See* 28 U.S.C. §§ 2244(d)(1)(B)-(D).

1 respect to the pertinent judgment or claim is pending.”” *Dictado v. Ducharme*, 244 F.3d 724,  
2 726 (9th Cir. 2001) (quoting 28 U.S.C. 2244(d)(2)). Petitioner indicates that he filed a habeas  
3 petition in state court in 2005, by which time the limitations period had expired approximately  
4 five years earlier. Such a petition, filed in the state court after AEDPA’s statute of limitations  
5 ended, does not toll the limitation period. *Ferguson v. Palmateer*, 321 F.3d 820, 823 (9th Cir.  
6 2003). Nor was the limitation period tolled during the pendency of petitioner’s prior federal  
7 habeas petition filed in 2008. *See Duncan v. Walker*, 533 U.S. 167, 180-81 (2001) (running of  
8 the limitation period is not tolled for the period during which a petition is pending in federal  
9 court).

10 Petitioner argues that he is entitled to equitable tolling due to his mental illness. He  
11 states that when he arrived in prison he was diagnosed with “psychosis” and that he is currently  
12 being assisted by a “prisoner paralegal” (Pet. 3-5). According to petitioner, in 2005, at the  
13 advice of a “prison paralegal” he filed a habeas petition in the state courts, which was denied  
14 (*id.* 5). He claims that since that time his “continuing mental issues and medication” have  
15 prevented him from pursuing any other challenges to his conviction (*ibid.*). The Supreme Court  
16 has determined that AEDPA’s statute of limitations is subject to equitable tolling in appropriate  
17 cases. *Holland v. Florida*, No. 09-5327, slip op. at 12 (U.S. June 14, 2010). “[A] ‘petitioner’ is  
18 ‘entitled to equitable tolling’ only if he shows ‘(1) that he has been pursuing his rights diligently,  
19 and (2) that some extraordinary circumstance stood in his way’ and prevented timely filing.” *Id.*  
20 at 16-17 (quoting *Pace v. DiGuglielmo*, 544 U.S. 408, 418 n.8 (2005)). The prisoner also must  
21 show that “the ‘extraordinary circumstances’ were the cause of his untimeliness.” *Spitsyn v.*  
22 *Moore*, 345 F.3d 796, 799 (9th Cir. 2003) (citations omitted).

23 In support of his equitable tolling argument, petitioner submits medical records  
24 indicating: (1) that in May 1999 he was held on suicide watch for twenty-one days; (2) that he  
25 was diagnosed in June 1999 with a “severe” mental illness; (3) that he began the prison’s  
26 “Mental Health Program” on June 6, 1999, and since that time he completed the “Extended  
27 Outpatient Program;” and (4) that he has since been treated with the medication Zyprexa (Opp.  
28 Exs. A1-A2; Suppl. Opp. Ex. A). The records also indicate that he is “currently” functioning

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1 well, and that his condition has improved due to his medication and his “commitment to his  
2 own improvement” (Opp. Ex. A). Dr. Mathews, a clinical psychologist, writes that petitioner  
3 has improved sleep, appetite, and capacity to “think rationally,” and that “for several years”  
4 petitioner had a record of nonviolence (*ibid.*).

5 In order for petitioner’s mental incompetence to equitably toll the limitations period, he  
6 must show that it caused him to be unable to file his federal petition on time. *See Gaston v.*  
7 *Palmer*, 417 F.3d 1030, 1034-35 (9th Cir. 2005), *amended*, 447 F.3d 1165 (9th Cir. 2006)  
8 (holding that where prisoner fails to show causal connection between physical and mental  
9 disabilities and inability to timely file petition, district court’s finding that he was not entitled to  
10 equitable tolling where he had earlier filed a state habeas petition was not clear error). There is  
11 evidence that in May and June 1999 petitioner had “severe” mental problems and was suicidal,  
12 and at that time entered the mental health program at the prison. Dr. Mathews opines that “at  
13 that time” petitioner would not have been able to understand the deadlines for his habeas  
14 petition (Suppl. Opp. Ex. A). Since then, however, petitioner’s capacity to function has  
15 improved significantly because of the medical treatment, medication and petitioner’s own  
16 efforts (*ibid.*). Dr. Mathews states that “for several years” he has been “impressed by”  
17 petitioner’s “calmness, logic and record of nonviolence,” and that petitioner displays  
18 “steadiness and functioning” and a “capacity to think rationally” (*ibid.*). Thus, petitioner’s  
19 mental condition did not remain so severe for the nine-year period between 2000 and 2009, the  
20 period of time that the limitations period would need to be equitably tolled in order to render the  
21 instant petition timely. Indeed, petitioner was able to file a state habeas petition in 2005.  
22 Although petitioner states that petition, like the instant petition, was filed with the assistance of  
23 another prisoner, there is no explanation as to why, if he was able to file a state habeas petition  
24 in 2005, he could not have filed a federal petition at that time, with assistance if necessary. The  
25 evidence of petitioner’s mental illness does not establish that his mental illness actually  
26 rendered him incapable of filing a petition for the entire nine years that the instant petition is  
27 late. Therefore, the petition is not rendered timely by virtue of equitable tolling.

28 Accordingly, motion to dismiss the petition as untimely will be granted.

## CONCLUSION

Respondent's motion to dismiss (document number 4 on the docket) is **GRANTED**. The motion to file a late exhibit (docket number 7) is **GRANTED**. The instant petition is **DISMISSED**.

The clerk shall close the file and terminate any pending motions.

## IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: August 30, 2010.

WILLIAM ALSUP  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE